

MOSES' DYING CHARGE TO ISRAEL

NO. 2345

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*"And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years
in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart,
whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."
Deuteronomy 8:2*

THESE are the words of Moses, the man of God, when he was near his departure. They make up a part of what has been called his "swan song." He did not often sing, he did give us at least one song, but when he came near the time he was to die, like the fabled swan, he began to sing, and most sweetly did he sing.

Notice the intense earnestness of this address, it is every way that of a saint who has spent his life in loving anxiety for the people committed to his charge, and the ruling passion is very strong upon him to the last. He knows that he is about to depart from them, for he has had his marching orders, "Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." Knowing that he is about to leave the people, he is very anxious about their welfare, and he addresses them with this deep earnestness.

Note also, how practical his earnestness is, it is concerning their lives that he speaks to the children of Israel. He knows how liable they are to fall into the superstitions of their neighbors, how likely they, who made a golden calf and angered the Lord and his servant, will be to turn again unto graven images and strange gods, and so he beseeches them, as with his dying breath, to observe all the commandments of the Lord to do them, and to cleave closely unto JEHOVAH their God.

Then, like an old man again, for this is a point that would be sure to come out in a venerable, soon-departing saint, he talks about the past. He has been preserved by his God for a hundred and twenty years, and during the last forty of those years he has been king in Jeshurun, and the Lord has made him ride upon the high places of the earth in the wonders that he has wrought by His hand, and he cannot help reminding the people that the marvels God has accomplished must not be dead things to them, not things to be laid by like mummies wrapped up in sere clothes, and hidden away in a sarcophagus, but they must be living mercies to them still, since they came from a living God, and they must continue to produce in them living gratitude and living service.

I like this thought, it seems to teach us how, as we mature in life, we shall become more and more anxious about practical holiness, and we shall, more and more draw the argument for it from our own experience of the goodness of God. With the psalmist we shall cry, "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar," and what cords can be stronger than the cords of love and the bands of a man, even gratitude at the remembrance of all the lovingkindness of the Lord?

I cannot imagine that the iron chains of necessity, or the steel bonds of fear, can ever hold men so firmly to duty and virtue as these silken bands of thankfulness at the recollection of all the Lord's grace and mercy to us. May we feel these love-bands about us as we meditate upon these words of Israel's great leader!

I invite you then, first of all, to consider *the leading of God which is to be remembered*, and secondly, *the objectives of that leading*, which are also well worthy of remembrance.

I. First then, consider THE LEADING TO BE REMEMBERED, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.” Some of you can knock out that word “forty,” and put in “fifty” or “sixty,” I know some here who can say “seventy,” I can even see some who can put in “eighty” years, not of life merely, but of divine leading, for there are some here who have been led of the Lord, in their own experience, no less a space than that longest period I have named.

The first thing that we note here about the children of Israel is that *they had a God*, and the first thing for us to remember tonight is that God ever had anything at all to do with us, that we ever had a God. “Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee.” We have not been led by a stranger, but by our own God, and we have not been led by a human shepherd, but the Lord has been our Shepherd. Though He tells the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names, and leads the hosts of heaven in their marches through illimitable space, yet has He not disdained to lead us.

Unhappy men who have no God! Saints are poor sometimes, but they do not know the poverty of the man who has no God. No gold, no silver—this is an inconvenience, but no God—*this* is death in the midst of life. Glory be to God, there are some of His people who, though they have barely sufficient food and raiment, and though scant is the portion of their lot below, yet they have a God, and he who has a God is rich to all the intents of bliss!

There are infinite mines of unfailing wealth just beneath his foot, he has but to dig a little to find all that he needs in God. It is a blessed thing to have God when you have all things beside, and to find God in all things, but it is an equally blessed thing to have God when you have nothing else, and to find all things in God. There is but a slight change in the order of the words, and I think there is not much change in the real sense as to true happiness.

Oh, brothers and sisters, what a wonder it is that God should have looked upon you and upon me with an eye of love! Well, I can leave off wondering that He should have loved some of you, but I never shall leave off being astonished that He should ever have regarded *me* with complacency and love. Nobody in this place sings with greater emphasis than I do, that verse of which many of you also are so fond—

*“What was there in you that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father,’ you ever must sing,
‘Because it seemed good in thy sight.’”*

The sovereign mercy of God, born in His own bosom, nurtured from His own heart, could only have induced Him to look with love upon us.

But what love it has been! No commonplace love, no ordinary affection. Mothers have loved us, fathers have loved us, we know the love of a fond spouse, and the love of children and of friends, but these are only like twinkling glowworm sparks, while the love of God seems to us to be the very sun, blazing in full glory in the heavens.

He loved us, to what shall I liken His love? He loved us as He loved His only begotten Son, nay, He seemed to love us even more than that, for He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. He loved us better than He loved Himself, for in order that we might live, He put Himself to that great loss of tearing His Only Begotten from the place of His everlasting abode in peace.

Oh, wonder of wonders, that God should ever have loved us so! “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This glorious truth is enough to make us all spring to our feet, feeling that we are in the presence of the miraculous and the divine, as indeed we are.

More than that, if more can be, we have to tell the wonderful story of the love of God the Son, and of the love of the Spirit, which made the love of the Father and the love of the Son to be effectual, for the Spirit came to us, and turned our hearts into the way of faith, and we embraced the Son, whom in our

blindness we had despised. Oh, let us tell tonight, tell to our own hearts if we cannot speak it out, the wondrous love which has given us a God at all, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost should have such condescending dealings with us!

In the next place, Moses not only said that Israel had a God, but that *God had led them*. I am not going to preach tonight, I am only going to try to get you to think of how God has led you, and you will do that all the better if I keep gratefully thinking in my own mind of how He has led me. Oh, how He led some of us—

*“When Satan’s blind slaves,
We sported with death”!*

We should have damned ourselves before conversion if we had been left to ourselves, but God, every now and then held back our rebellious hand, and checked our wayward will. “I girded thee,” said He to Cyrus, “though thou hast not known me.” And so it was with us full often, the Lord girded us, what if I say that He put the bit in our mouth when we were like leviathan, and a hook in our jaws when we were like a crocodile, and wildly refused to know anything that could tame us?

He held us back from evil, and led us in the right way, but oh, the sweet way in which He led us to the cross! He drove us and he drew us. With the law He sternly lashed us, with His love He deftly drew us. And oh, the glory of the light when He brought us to it! Yet we shut our eyes and rushed back into the darkness, but He would have us see the light, so we were sweetly forced to come, and the scales dropped off our eyes, and we saw that sight, the like of which we have often seen since then, but the like of which we never imagined in our blind estate.

Oh, to be led to Jesus! If there were nothing else for us but just to be led to lie at His feet, and weep ourselves away in penitence, and get back again to joyous communion with Him by a believing confidence, if there were no other leading than that, we might well ask for a well-tuned harp, and never wish to rest our fingers, but continue forever to smite its strings in sweetest minstrelsy of praise.

Many days have passed since then, beloved, with some of us, since those early days when we hoped for salvation, when we grasped the promises, when we rested on the finished work of Christ, when we had our first trembling joy in believing, and all the way we have been led so singularly. I could not tell you how I came to be where I now am except by saying, “He leadeth me! He leadeth me!”

Could you tell how you came to be where you are? Was there not a time when, if anyone had said you would be what you are, and where you are, you would have despised him, for you hated the thought of it? And was there not another time when you would have laughed outright and said, “It can never be. What! *I* have a good hope of heaven, *I* who now stand trembling on the brink of the abyss? What! *I* be numbered with the children, when it will be a marvel of mercy if I am ever allowed to eat a crumb with the dogs under the table?” Yet it is so, and the Lord has led you.

He has led some of us where the track was as narrow as a razor’s edge. He has led us where black darkness was on either side, and with half a slip we would have been in hell. He has led us where we could not see our way and where, if we could have seen it, we might have swooned for very fright, yet we are safe.

He has led us through the furnace, and not so much as a smell of fire has been upon us, He has led us when we have been, like Jonah, in the depths of the sea in very despair, and yet we are safe on dry land. Glory be to the divine Leader who has led us by a right way, bringing us by a way that we knew not, thus far *en route* for the city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! We praise Him tonight for having led us thus far.

But that is not all. Moses bade the Israelites remember that they had a God, and that He had led them, but he also wanted the people to remember that *their way had been through the wilderness*, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led you these forty years in the wilderness.”

So far as any ministry to our spiritual wants is concerned, this world is a wilderness. There is every temporal comfort provided for us, and yet, with all those temporal comforts, there is such a thing as

having a starved soul. What is there in this world that can minister to the requirements of a spiritual man? Nothing. As well might Israel in the wilderness have devoured the stones of the desert as any man live upon what this world can furnish him of spiritual meat. It is a wilderness, and there are scorpions in it, perhaps one of them has bitten you today, and there are fiery serpents, you may meet a lot of them tomorrow, and there are Amalekites that seek to smite the hindmost of us, and there are all kinds of other evils and mischiefs in this wilderness.

Do not let us imagine that we have got to heaven yet, I think I have known some brethren who have thought that they were almost there. They have taken off their winter-proofs and overcoats, and laid them by, thinking they would never need them again. Ah, my good mariner, you will want that oilskin suit yet! There may be many a rough night for you yet before you cross the narrow sea. We have not yet come unto the fair havens of eternal peace. You sing sometimes—

*“My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this.”*

Well, perhaps you would like to stay there, but you are not to do so. “Go forward,” says the Lord, and in going forward, you may have to endure many trials of which you have never dreamed, for it is a wilderness still through which you are journeying.

Now, I want you to recollect that all these years, God has led you through the wilderness, and being in the wilderness still, this fact ought to comfort you. If you should be in the wilderness for another twenty years, the God who has led you forty years can lead you another twenty.

The God who has led some of you dear sisters here present eighty years—what! can you not trust Him for the other four, five, ten, or whatever number it may be? You do not expect to be a thousand years old, I am sure, but if you did, the God who kept Methuselah could also keep you, and if Enoch could walk with God for three hundred years at a stretch, so may we with God leading us. If we live as many years as there are days in the year, God has said, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be,” and He will bring us safely through. Let us not forget that.

Then we have to remember something more about the children of Israel, and that I have already anticipated, namely, that *God had led them forty years in the wilderness*. It is often the length of an experience that is the trial of it. “In the wilderness”—that is bad enough, but “forty years in the wilderness”—that is the test of endurance.

Plenty of people seem to start rightly, but they have no staying power. With all the foes we have to face in the wilderness, who is able to endure? Who? Why the man who has God with him and God within him! He will endure to the end, and “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” But here is that which makes a long life so trying, that all the while you are in *the wilderness*. Yet here is also, your consolation, for long as your life has been, yet the Lord has led you through that very respectable period of forty years. Surely you cannot now doubt as to His ability to lead you and keep you, even to the end.

Remember those past forty years, do not forget them, I pray you. If you have an old friend whom you have tried and tested for a long period, if you are a wise man, you will grapple him to your soul with hooks of steel, and as to your God in heaven, who has been with you all these years, and kept you from childhood even until now, you will say, “I cannot doubt Him, I cannot look elsewhere for a leader. I remember the God who has led me through the wilderness these forty years.”

Again, according to the text, *all the way that God had led His people was worth remembering*, “And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee.” “All the way.” It is always a pity to look at things only in parts, if we would see them aright, we must examine them as a whole. Sometimes it is our want of dealing with things as a whole that leads us to make mistakes. “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Not this thing, and that thing, and the other thing, by themselves, but all things put together work together for good.

Now remember, “*all the way*” whereby the Lord has led you. I know you remember the day when God led you by that grave, where half your heart and all your joy seemed buried, you went to see it the other day in the cemetery. Now, you remember that part of the way, but the exhortation is to remember “*all the way*” whereby the Lord has led you. Put this and that together, and you will have something more to remember than that one grave, and that dark day when they said that everything was lost, when your household goods were sold, and you were left penniless.

Yes, and the Lord led you through even that trial, you must remember all the way He led you, how He helped you, and brought you through that dark day into the light again, “Remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee.”

I would desire tonight to think of all the lovingkindness of God. I think it is worthwhile to remember those rough bits of road, for we are to remember all the way, but remember also those beautiful walks by the river of the water of life, and those happy climbings to the top of Mount Clear. Yes, you may recollect Giant Despair's Castle and By-path Meadow, to sorrow over them, but then God did not lead you there. You had better remember the Interpreter's House and the Delectable Mountains, where He did lead you, for where He led you all was well.

As to where you went of your own accord, the only leadings that you can remember with joy were those in which He led you back again with weeping and supplication, till you were almost glad to kiss every flint that cut your feet, so long as you really felt that you were back in the old road again, for there you loved to be, and anywhere else you knew you were in great danger.

Let us sing of mercy and of judgement, unto Thee, O God, will we sing with mingled strains! We will run up the scale to the highest notes of a joyous Hallelujah, and every note shall be for Thee, but we will go down to the deepest tones as well, and still every note shall be unto Thee, O God! “Remember all the way which the LORD thy God led you these forty years in the wilderness.”

Observe this one thing more, dear friends, *that the children of Israel were commanded to remember the Lord's leading*, and I do not, this evening, merely invite you to remember all the way that the Lord has led you, but as my text puts it as a command, so I give it to you as a command from God. There is a “thou shalt” to it, and therefore I leave my text in your hands, not to be accepted or rejected at your option, but as a positive command binding upon every man who has been led of God. If you are indeed the sheep of His pasture this command comes to you with all the force of divine authority.

II. Now, in the second place, I ask you to think upon THE OBJECTS OF THAT LEADING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, “To humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”

God has led you, and the time—the forty years, the place—the wilderness, and the method of His leading have all co-operated to effect two purposes.

First of all, *to humble you*. In the review of your life of mercy, do you not feel humbled? I think that there is everything about it to make us all feel humble.

The first thing to humble us is the remembrance that we have all along been receiving gifts, that is always a humbling experience. We like better to give than to receive. There is great pride about giving, but all this while, as far as God is concerned, we have been what one called, “gentlemen commoners upon the Lord's bounty.”

We have been pensioners at His gate, we have been beggars at His door, and the only livery that we could put on and call our own is the livery of a beggar. We have been allowed to beg, and we have always had alms given to us according to our faith. That ought to humble us. We have not earned a penny, but have been always living on charity, we have been supported on divine alms all this while.

I will tell you what often humbles me. If I attempt any work for God, and I do not succeed at it, I am disappointed, but I make up my mind to try again. But if I succeed, then do I not begin to boast directly? Certainly not.

Have you ever noticed what Peter did when he went fishing, and got his boat full? The boat began to go down as soon as it was loaded with fish, and so did Peter, till he went down so low that he cried out

to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" He felt that he was not worthy to have Christ in the same boat with him.

The more God blesses you, if you are a man of God, the humbler you will be. It is His mercies, His favors, His lovingkindnesses that will tend to humble you, and make you say with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant." God humbles some of His people with favor and love, others, who may not be humbled that way, have to be brought low in another manner.

Now, in looking back, do not your prayers humble you? Is there one prayer you have prayed of which you dare to be proud? Do not your sweetest communings with God humble you? In hearing of Him by the hearing of the ear, you may not be humbled, but when your eye sees Him, you lie low, with Job, and abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes.

Are you not humbled at the recollection of what you have not done, your sins of omission? How many they have been! Are you not humbled at the thought of the many other people's sins, as well as your own, that are laid to your charge, sins that grew out of your example, or that were not rebuked as they ought to have been, so that you became by your negligence a partaker in them?

Ah, dear sirs, if we have anything whereof which we think we could glory for a moment, it must be because we have forgotten all those forty years in the wilderness, for there is a crowd of memories that will come before the mind of any thoughtful man to humble him.

The point that humbles one most is to think that we should need all this humbling, that God should have to put us in a wilderness for forty years to humble us. What proud wretches we must be, pride must be ingrained in us, if we need all this discipline to get it out! The children of Israel were proud, and when I mention the ways in which they manifested their pride, I think that I shall only be holding the looking glass up to yourselves.

They were proud because they murmured. As soon as they began to be a little thirsty or hungry, they complained, and what was that murmuring but a proof of their pride? "I am such a very great person that I ought not to suffer hunger, I am such an important individual that I ought not to endure thirst."

That was part of the Israelites' pride, and then they began to doubt God. They had scarcely heard the last rattle of the chariots of the Egyptians when they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" They pretended that they knew better than God, and unbelief is only a kind of veiled pride in which we begin to set up our own judgment against the wisdom of God.

They were also very proud because they were so hot, and fiery, and passionate, and eager. Moses had only been gone from them forty days when they said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." So they must have a god of their own making, a molten calf, to take the place of JEHOVAH who had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh. If God waited, they could not wait, not they. All this was the effect of pride.

Now, do you not find murmuring, and unbelief, and a wicked impetuosity still clinging to you? Well then, that is what God is trying to get out of you. All the experience of the forty years in the wilderness has been meant to humble us, and if it does not humble us, what is to become of us? If our experience of God's love, and of our own frailty, does not lay us in the dust, what must we be? O God, by Your blessed Spirit, cause all these experiences to be effectual that we may be really humble before You!

Yet I am afraid that if the Lord does not work another miracle, we shall get prouder still, for we are very apt, as we grow in years, to think, "Well now, I am an experienced person, I shall not fall like those silly boys." The man who talks like that is the very man who does fall.

I have often had to tell you that in Scripture you have scarcely an instance of a young believer falling into sin, but nearly all the cases of backsliding recorded are those of old men, and "old fools are the worst fools." We who are getting on in years and have had a long experience, are just the kind of stone that the devil likes to carve into monuments of our own folly. Do not therefore think that because any of

you know more than you did, and are walking nearer to God than you used to be, there is anything for you to glory in.

No, the distinct tendency of all this should be, by divine grace, to make us more cautious, more timorous, more trembling, more fearful of ourselves, and at the same time, more confident in God, more humble, and therefore more believing, for I do not think that, until self-confidence is emptied out of us, there is room for confidence in God. Pride is the enemy of faith, and humility is the brother of true assurance. God bless then, all our wilderness experience to our humbling!

The second object of the Lord's leading appears to be, according to our text, *to prove us*. Does not the Lord know us? Yes, He does, but still He wants to know us, in another sense by actual tests. God has given us these forty years in the wilderness on purpose to test us.

Will Richardson, a friend of mine, an old farm laborer in Essex, said to me once, "Do you know, sir, all through the winter I am thinking that when the hay-time comes, I will earn a good lump of money at hay-making, I am thinking about how well I will use my scythe and make a long day's work, and then I think I will reap many an acre when it gets to harvest-time. But," he added, "I have not been in the field above half-an-hour before my poor old back aches and I begin to find that Will cannot do much now that he is getting on to eighty-six." He said, "It is wonderful what strength I have when there is not any grass to cut, and when there is no corn to get in."

So is it with many of us, we have a lot of faith till the trouble comes, and God therefore leads us again into the wilderness, and leaves us there just to prove us, and to show us that we are not the rich people, and the great people, and the believing people that we fancied we were. Thus the Lord tests us, and in the testing ninety-nine parts out of a hundred evaporate, perhaps nine hundred and ninety-nine parts out of a thousand vanish away, and we have to bless God if there is even a thousandth part left of what we thought we had.

Well, brethren, beside this testing of our faith, and our love, and our graces, of which I have not time to speak, the Lord also leads us through the wilderness in order to discover to us somewhat of the mischief that lurks within our nature. We have no idea what bad folk we are. I do not think there are any men or women here who have the slightest idea of what evil they may be capable, if they are only put under certain conditions and the grace of God is taken away from them.

Blasphemies, and murders, and foul lusts, still lurk within that old mind of the flesh that abides even in the nature of the regenerate, and if those vile dogs once get loose, oh, sirs, they will bite like the dog of the most unrenewed man! Every now and then, even we who are God's children find out what we can do, what we can say, and what we can feel.

Oh, I wish we would believe in the sanctifying power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, and have no confidence in self at all, but cry for its mortification, its death, and its burial with Christ, for that is the only thing to be done with it! While there is any life in the old flesh, the flesh is still flesh, and none of us can tell what evil it will work if it once gets the opportunity. God leads us through the wilderness that we may discover this.

And once more, I'm sure that the Lord also leads us through the wilderness as He led Israel, that He may see whether we really will keep His commandments or not. Yes, you have behaved well as an apprentice, so the Lord lets you become a journeyman. You have done well as a journeyman, but yet you may fail when you come to be a master.

There was a young man who attended this house of prayer regularly, he was much persecuted by his father and mother, and all the while he seemed wonderfully earnest. His parents are dead, and he is his own master, and the possessor of a good deal of wealth, but alas! I do not think he ever goes to the house of God now, or has any care about it. I have often noticed that persons, downtrodden and oppressed, will hold on to Christ, yet when they get their liberty, they will run away from Him. It is a singular thing, but it is true.

Some seem to change their religion with their coats. When their coat is half-worn out, they do not mind mixing up with all classes of people that worship God, but when they wear respectable broadcloth,

and especially when her ladyship puts on satin, then they want to go somewhere else. Now, the Lord leads people about, up high and down low, to see whether they will keep His commandments, for that religion that will not stand the test of all weathers is worth nothing.

If we do not so love God that whether He puts a hedge about us, or whether He permits Satan to break through the hedge, and take away all that we have, if we do not still cling to Him, fair or foul, we do not love Him at all, and to separate between the precious and the vile, is often the reason of the working of the hand of the God of providence towards professors of religion. O God, help us to know ourselves and to know Thee, and make us right towards Thee!

I have not spoken much directly to unconverted people tonight, yet my subject has all been for them as well as for the Lord's people. I should like them to look back over the years in which they have lived without God, yet God has not left them altogether, and He has tonight brought them into this Tabernacle where there sounds forth a silver trumpet of which this is the note, "Turn unto Me and live. Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." May you tonight, as you take a review of your past life, be moved to feel, "Surely, God must mean to bless me, or He would not have been so good to me!"

I was speaking with an officer who rode in the charge at Balaclava, one of the very few who came out alive, and though I had not seen him before, I could not help putting my hand on his shoulder and saying to him, "Surely, the rest of your life, so strangely spared, must be dedicated to God." It may be that you have been in a shipwreck and that you barely escaped, or you were in a terrible collision on the railway. Possibly you have had typhoid fever. It may be that you were laid low the last time the cholera was raging here, or you have been kicked by a horse, or you have escaped from all sorts of tragedies, yet here you are. Should not the life which has been so specially spared be dedicated to God?

We read of John Bunyan, that in his godless days he was foolhardy to the last degree, and once when a serpent came in his way, he took it up and plucked out the poison gland from it. It was a wonder that he was not stung, but he was not, and the reason was that God meant him to write *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and he could not die till he had done that. And I believe that the Lord has some design of love towards some of you who are here tonight. Go and seek His face and cry to Him for mercy and He will grant it to you tonight.

We prayed that all who came in here might be saved. I trust they will be. I believe they will be. What a joyous thing it would be for all of us to be bound for glory! Let us begin to praise the Lord's name that all of us are to go to heaven in answer to that prayer! Well, as you are going there, you had better begin to learn something about it, and get ready for it, and I invite you to do so. Let us begin the music of heaven by singing this one verse—

*"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all."*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 139:1-18

Verse 1. *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*

"Thou hast explored me, as men dig in mines, and make subterranean excavations. Thou hast searched into my secret parts, and known me."

2. *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,—*

"My simplest acts, those which I scarcely premeditated."

2. *Thou understandest my thought afar off.*

"Before I think it, when I think it, and when I forget it, Thou dost understand my every thought."

3. *Thou compassest my path and my lying down,—*

"Making a ring around me, so that I am entirely under Thine observation. My roving and my resting are both known to Thee."

3. *And art acquainted with all my ways.*

"My habits, and the exceptions from my habits, are all known to Thee."

4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

"When it is on my tongue, and not spoken, like a seed sown, hidden away, not yet sprouted, Thou, O JEHOVAH, knowest it altogether!"

5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

"I am like a prisoner, with guards before me and behind me, and the officer's hand upon my shoulder all the while. Thou hast arrested me, O Lord, I can never get away from Thee."

6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

"I believe it, but I cannot understand it, even my imagination cannot picture it to me."

7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?*

"If I want to do so, if I desire to avoid Thee, where can I go to escape from Thine omnipresent Spirit?"

7-8. *Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:*

The true glory of that bright world.

8. *If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

"The terror of that place of woe, in the land of death-shadow and darkness, Thou art living, whoever else is dead. If I make my abode in Hades, in Sheol, Thou art there."

9-10. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me,—*

"If the breath of the morning breeze should bear me far away across the pathless sea, Thou art there before me, if I ride upon a flash of light, Thou art swifter than the sunbeam, 'even there shall thy hand lead me.'" The lone missionary in the furthest parts of the earth is led by God. When he knows not his way, God leads him, and when he has no companion to cheer him, God's hand upholds him. What a comfort to any of you who have to journey far away from your kindred! You cannot be alone, for God is there, be of good comfort and go as bravely as if you walked the crowded streets of this great city.

10-12. *And thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

It is impossible to conceive that God should need the light in order to see. He can see as well in the midnight shades as in the blaze of noon. Let no man think that he may sin in secret because he is not seen of the eyes of man, God's eye is on him in the dark as much as in the light.

13-14. *For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

He was no Agnostic, he never dreamed of being a know-nothing.

15-17. *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*

How sweet to be thought of by God! How charming and how cheering to be the perpetual object of the Lord's thoughts! The psalmist does not tell us how precious are God's thoughts, but he sets a note of

admiration to them, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" He does not try to calculate the total of their value, but he says, "How great is the sum of them!"

18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

"Thou hast thought of me when I was asleep, and when I wake, I think of Thee." Happy living, happy dying, to feel that, if we never wake again on earth, we shall wake up with God! How precious it is to think that when good and useful men fall asleep, when they awake, they are for ever with the Lord! Our turn will come soon, my brothers and sisters. May it be our portion to die in harness, and to be taken away while yet we have the light of God's countenance resting upon our work!

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—214, 139 (SONG 1), 1035

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.